

From: John Queenan
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/23/02 3:32pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

To whom it may concern,

I am a long time computer user and programmer. For purposes of fair disclosure, I'll say that I am primarily a Macintosh user, however, the realities of the computing profession naturally have forced me to work in other computing environments including Windows variations as well as open unix environments.

I must strongly oppose the proposed settlement against Microsoft. I find it to be entirely unacceptable.

Please consider postponing preliminary approval of the proposed settlement.

The settlement as written would be a killing blow to any non-Microsoft technology.

I echo Apple CEO Steve Jobs:

"The centerpiece of Microsoft's proposed \$1 billion civil antitrust settlement is their donation of Microsoft software, which they value at \$830 million, to our schools," said Jobs. "We think people should know that the actual costs to Microsoft for this donated software will likely be under \$1 million. We think a far better settlement is for Microsoft to give their proposed \$1 billion -- in cash -- to an independent foundation, which will provide our most needy schools with the computer technology of their choice."

Personally, I find even this to be unacceptable and not punitive enough. But it would suffice if no other options were available.

Rather than being shown a variety of operating systems and technologies, generations of students will experience a Microsoft-controlled computing experience. (This is already happening thanks to other anti-competitive practices with OEMs in business, home and education markets!) Students will train using Microsoft-centric programming tools and techniques and then when confronted with competing technologies and methods they will find them lacking if they do not flawlessly interact with the Microsoft systems. They also might lack features that Microsoft enjoys due to them having access to Windows APIs that outside developers don't.

Microsoft can also steal features from the competition and give it away. This effectively makes third-party developers "outside Research and Developers" for future Microsoft products (assuming they aren't bought outright by Microsoft). (Apple Computer was often called "R&D South" by

Microsoft employees; A quick glance at Windows Media Player shows how Microsoft wants to kill both Apple's QuickTime player and Real networks RealPlayer - it apes the look and feel and functionality of each). And since Microsoft can choose to smother a technology merely by making it incompatible, the student will for an unjustly negative opinion of the competing technology.

Furthermore, the student will then taint all judgements and assessments of software and computer purchases at home and work as well as when they start businesses. The "taking what you learn back home" factor is huge: siblings and parents will be urged/forced to use Microsoft products, as students rarely are taught the bigger picture of operating systems and programming concepts, but rather are sold only the Microsoft specific way of doing things.

Additionally Microsoft corrupts open standards such as web languages and introduce features that only work on Windows systems. As a web developer I have found this to complicate my job immeasurably and it forces me to give up using the open standard and instead adopt the Windows versions.

Microsoft has smothered hundreds of innovations by either copying it outright (then giving it away for free), buying it and repackaging as it's own or making it incompatible with other OSes.

This settlement is a slap on the wrist.

Sincerely,

John Queenan
20 Ashford St.
Allston MA
02134

=====

Resources:

- * Apple: Microsoft should pay \$1 billion--cash
<http://zdnet.com.com/2100-1106-802226.html?legacy=zdn>
- * Apple CEO Jobs is Right, Microsoft Settlement is Wrong
<http://www.osopinion.com/perl/story/15015.html>
- * Microsoft changed Internet Explorer on Windows to break the Quicktime Plugin.
<http://news.com.com/2100-1023-271653.html?legacy=cnet>
- * Microsoft working with the CD industry to make Windows Media Player the default format.

http://news.com.com/2009-1023-273619.html?legacy=cnet&tag=tp_pr

* Microsoft blocked competing browsers from MSN.

http://news.com.com/2100-1023-274980.html?legacy=cnet&tag=tp_pr

* Microsoft tracking your viewing habits.

<http://www.wired.com/news/privacy/0,1848,49028,00.html>

* Microsoft rigs online polls to create spurious endorsements of their technologies over competing ones:

<http://news.zdnet.co.uk/story/0,,t269-s2102244,00.html>

* Microsoft lobbying campaign backfires; even dead people write in support of firm

http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/nationworld/134332634_microlob23.html